Government would provide financial assistance according to the prescribed pattern if such assistance is sought.

Backward Communities in SC/ST Lists

*399. SHRI KODIKKUNNIL SURESH: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to include backward communities in the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes lists;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any State Government has recommended the inclusion of any backward community in these lists: and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI SITARAM KESRI): (a) to (d). Any amendment in the existing lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes can be made only through an Act of Parliament as laid down in Articles 341(2) and 342(2) of the Constitution.

The details of proposals received cannot be disclosed in the public interest.

[*Translation*]

Foeticide Cases

*400. SHRI ASHOK ANANDRAO DESHMUKH:
SHRI PRAKASH V. PATIL:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be please to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware about the recent cases of foeticide in the country;

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to check this evil practice;

(c) the names of clinics in the country which perform amniocentesis tests;

(d) whether the Government propose to ban such tests; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI M.L. FOTEDAR): (a) to (e). The Government are aware of the misuse of the pre-natal diagnostic techniques for determination of the sex of the foetus leading to cases of female foeticide in different parts of the country.

A Central legislation to regulate prenatal diagnostic techniques and to ban the misuse thereof for determination of the sex of the foetus, is under active consideration.

Information relating to clinics performing amniocentesis tests is not being monitored by the Government of India as there is no Central Law regulating such tests.

[*English*]

Resources For Housing Needs

*401 SHRI VIJAY NAVAL PATIL: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the resources required per annum for meeting the housing needs of the country by the end of this century; and

(b) the details of fiscal and other incentives the Government propose to provide for land development and housing?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI SHEILA KAUL): (a) and (b). The Working Group for the VIII Five

Year Plan has projected that the total investment required for the Plan period (1990-91 to 1994-95) would be of the order of Rs. 77,500 crore of Rs. 15,500 crore per annum. No separate estimate of the resources required per annum for the further period has been made.

2. In addition to steps taken earlier, a number of fiscal incentives for investment in housing have been proposed in the Budget for 1991-92.

3. In keeping with the thrust of the draft National Housing Policy, the Government would play a catalytic, promotional and facilitative role to encourage larger investment in housing by the private sector, cooperatives and individuals. Towards this end, several measures are envisaged which include amendment of the Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act, finalisation of the National Housing Policy, amendments in the Rent Control Act, amendment of the constitution to enable setting up of Rent Tribunals, streamlining and rationalisation of stamp duty and registration procedures etc.

Cutting Of Forests By State Forest Corporations

*402. SHRI K. PRADHANI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the union Government propose to stop the cutting of forests by the State Forest Corporations;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government also propose to stop Podu cultivation/shifting cultivation; and

(d) if so, the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b). There is no proposal of the Central Government to stop harvesting of matured crop by the Forest Corporations in the States with a view to discontinue the sale of timber. However, the Central Government have issued guidelines to the State Governments asking them to consider imposing certain restrictions on felling of trees.

The Forest Policy 1988 lays emphasis on environmental stability and maintenance of ecological balance, and in keeping with this principal aim, in the guidelines, Government of India have asked the State Governments to consider banning felling of trees in hills above 1000 meters, at least for some years. In very special cases, however, where such fellings are inevitable for silvicultural considerations for restoration of natural regeneration, it is restricted to 10 ha. in the hills, and 25 ha. in the plains.

(c) and (d). Government of India, through the Ministry of Agriculture, have been providing Central Assistance to the State Governments for implementation of a scheme for control of shifting cultivation.

Death Due To T.B.

*403. SHRI DATTATRAYA BANDARU:
SHRI MAHESH KANODIA:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of persons die of T.B. every year;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the death rate in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra is high;